Characters

- ORA (Big Shot): *Short, ugly, crude, loud.*
- WILLIE LOVE: *Tall, thin. Should have been sensitive. Smiles.*
- HINES: *Big, husky, garrulous. He and Love are closest friends.*
- JOHNNY BOY HOLMES: *Short, curly hair. Bright, fast, likable.*
- PERRY: *Tall, dark, somber, cynical.*
- GEORGE DAVIS: *Tall, thin, crudely elegant. Judicious.*
- SKIPPY: *Quick. Rather stupid but interested. Someone to be trusted.*
- KNOWLES: *Large and ridiculous. A grinning ape.*
- DONALD FARRELL: *Tall, thin, blonde, awkward, soft.*
- FOOTS (Ray): *Short, intelligent, manic. Possessor of a threatened empire.*
- KAROLIS: *Medium height. Very skinny and not essentially attractive except when he speaks.*

Act

The scene is a large bare toilet built of gray rough cement. There are urinals along one wall and a partition separating them from the commodes which are along the same wall. The toilet must resemble the impersonal ugliness of a school toilet or a latrine of some institution. A few rolls of toilet paper are spread out on the floor, wet through. The actors should give the impression frequently that the place smells.

Ora breaks through the door grinning, then giggling. Looks around the bleak place, walks around, then with one hand on his hip takes out his joint and pees, still grinning, into one of the commodes, spraying urine over the seat.

WILLIE LOVE

(sticking his head through the door)

Big Shot! Hey, Big Shot! These guys say come and help them.

ORA

(zipping his fly and wiping the one hand on the back of his pants)

Yeh?

(Turning to LOVE.)

Yeh? They got him, huh?

WILLIE LOVE

(pushing door open so his arm is straight)

Naw, they don't have him yet. He's on the second floor, running back and forth and hiding in empty rooms. But Knowles said for you to come help.

ORA

(flushing all the commodes and urinals in the row as he walks past)

Sheet! I'll catch that bastid in a second.

(Ducks under Love's arm to go out.)

Why the hell don't you get up there. You supposed to be faster than me.

WILLIE LOVE

I'm s'posed to stay here and keep the place clear.

(Making a face.)

Damn. This place smells like hell.

ORA

(without turning around)

Yeh

(giggling)

, this must be your momma's house.

WILLIE LOVE

(slipping inside the door and holding it against ORA)

Shit. At least I got one.

ORA

(thumps against the door, not really angry)

Bastid!

LOVE *waits a few seconds, then pulls the door open slightly. Then lets it shut and walks to a closed commode and noticing it's wet wipes it with some of the strewn toilet paper. He sits down and stretches his legs. Then gets up and opens the commode to pee. There are voices outside and then the door swings open and* HINES *and* HOLMES *come in.*

HINES

Hey, Willie.

WILLIE LOVE

(still peeing)

What you want?

(Comes out, zipping his pants.)

HINES

(to HOLMES)

Man, this cat's in here pulling his what-chamacallit.

JOHNNY BOY HOLMES

(*to* LOVE)

Yeh. Damn, Love, why don't you go get Gloria to do that stuff for you.

WILLIE LOVE

She-et.

(Grinning.)

Huh. I sure don't need your ol' lady to be pullin' on my joint.

(Laughs. HOLMES *begins to spar with him.)*

HINES

They didn't even catch that skinny nose punk yet.

WILLIE LOVE

No? Why in hell not?

JOHNNY BOY HOLMES

He's still running up and down the damn halls. I should go up there and drag that sonofabitch down.

HOLMES *and* HINES *begin to pee also in the commodes.*

LOVE *pulls open the door a small bit and looks out.*

WILLIE LOVE

Shit. Boy, all you slow ass cats. I'd catch that little skinny paddy boy in a second. Where's that little popeyed Foots?

HINES

Damn if I know. I think he's still in Miss Powell's class. You know if he missed her class she'd beat his head, and then get his ol' lady to beat his head again.

JOHNNY BOY HOLMES

Shit. Skippy should've got hold of that damn Karolis by now. He ain't fast worth a bitch.

WILLIE LOVE

Yeh, but he's so goddamned scary he might just jump out a goddamn window.

HOLMES *finishes peeing and starts pushing* LOVE *and they begin to spar around*. HOLMES *is very funny, making boxer-like sounds and brushing his nose continuously with his thumbs*. LOVE *just stands straight with his left hand stiff and stabbing it out toward Holmes' face*. HINES *finishes and gets in the action too. Both he and* HOLMES *are against* LOVE, *who starts to laugh and curse good naturedly*.

WILLIE LOVE

Two a' you bastids, huh? I'll take you both.

(He starts kicking at them.)

HINES

Boy, if you kick me, you'll die just like that. . .with your skinny ass leg up. They'll have to build you a special coffin with a part for your leg.

JOHNNY BOY HOLMES

(backing away, and then turning on HINES. *Laughing)*

Let's get this sum'bitch, Willie.

HINES

(backing away, now kicking and swinging. . .but just timing blows so they won't strike anyone)

Goddamn, Johnny Boy, you a crooked muthafucka. You cats think you can mess with the kid?

The two spar against HINES *and then* LOVE *turns against* HOLMES.

WILLIE LOVE

Let's get this little assed cat.

HOLMES *kicks at them, then jumps up on the commodes in order to defend himself more "heroically."*

JOHNNY BOY HOLMES

I'm gonna get your ass, Willie. I'm just trying to help you out and you gonna play wise. Ya' bastid.

HINES

Listen to that cat.

(Runs after HOLMES.)

I'm gonna put your damn head in one of those damn urinals.

He and LOVE *finally grab* HOLMES *and he begins struggling with them in earnest*.

Let's put this little bastard's head in the goddamn urinal!

JOHNNY BOY HOLMES

You bastids! Let me go! I'm gonna cut somebody. Bastids!

The door opens and ORA *comes in. His shirt is torn. But he rushes over laughing and starts punching everyone, even* HOLMES.

HINES

Goddamn it, Big Shot, get the hell out of here.

JOHNNY BOY HOLMES

Get 'em, Big Shot.

ORA

(punches HOLMES *who's still being held by* LOVE)

I'm gonna punch you, you prick. Hold the cocksucker, Love.

WILLIE LOVE

(releasing HOLMES *immediately)*

I ain't gonna hold him so you can punch him.

ORA *and* HOLMES *square off, both laughing and faking professional demeanor*.

WILLIE LOVE

Hey, Big Shot, what happened to your shirt?

ORA

(putting his hands down and handling the torn part of his shirt)

That muthafuckin' Karolis ripped it.

The other three yowl. HINES *puts his fingers to the hole as if to tear it again*.

Get outta here you black ass bastid.

(He squares off at HINES, *then pushes him away.)*

That paddy bastid! I had the cocksucker around the waist, and then he rips my shirt and scratches me.

(He holds up his wounded hand.)

HINES

You let him get away?

ORA

No, hell. I punched the bastid right in his lip. But he was making so much noise we thought somebody'd come out and see us so Knowles and Skippy took him in the broom closet and I cut down the stairs. The stupid bastid was screaming and biting right outside of ol' lady Powell's room.

JOHNNY BOY HOLMES

Did anybody come outta there?

ORA

You think I was gonna stay around and see? She and Miss Golden after me anyway.

WILLIE LOVE

Did you see Foots in there?

ORA

(going to the door and peering out)

Yeh. And George Davis and Perry are in there too.

(He pushes door open and leans all the way out.)

HINES

Shit. They're never gonna bring that sonofabitch down here. We ain't got all day.

ORA

(letting the door shut)

Yeh, Perry and Foots and them ought to be down here in a few minutes. It's almost 3:00 now.

WILLIE LOVE

*(pretending he has a basketball in his hands, he pretends to dribble and lunges forward simulating a fake at***HINES**, *then he sweeps past***HINES***and leaps in the air as if making a layup shot)*

Peed on you, just then, buddy.

HINES

Sheet, Man, you what you call a self-checker. I don't even have to block that shot. I just take it off the backboard like this.

(He spins around and leaps up at the imaginary basket and scoops the imaginary ball off, landing and shaking his head as if to shake off imaginary defenders.)

Another rebound!

(Makes motion of long pass down toward opposite "court.")

Now, the fast break

(He moves in position for his own pass, receives it, makes one long stepping dribble and leaps as if dunking the ball in the basket.)

Two!

JOHNNY BOY HOLMES

Boy, you guys sure play a lot of ball. . . off the court.

ORA

(opening the door again)

No Shootin' cocksuckas.

WILLIE LOVE

(still whirling and leaping as if he is making successful hook shots from an imaginary foul line)

Hey, what we gonna do to this cat when he gets here?

ORA

(leaning back in from the door though keeping it open with his fingers)

Damn, Love. You a stupid bastid.

(Peeks out door.)

We gonna kick that little frail bastid's ass.

HINES

In fact, you the one gonna do it, Willie.

JOHNNY BOY HOLMES

Yeh, Love.

(Blocking one of Love's "shots.")

WILLIE LOVE

Shit. Karolis never bothered me.

*(Faking***HOLMES***and swinging to shoot from the other side.)*

ORA

(looking back in and letting the door swing shut)

Damn, Willie

(in mocking seriousness)

, Karolis is always telling everybody how he bangs the hell out of Caroline, every chance he gets.

(Begins to giggle.)

JOHNNY BOY HOLMES

Is that your mother's name, Love, Caroline?

HINES

(busy trying to lift a back window to look out on the yard)

What you mean, Johnny Boy, is that his mother's name? You the one told me.

WILLIE LOVE

*(swinging around as if to shoot again he suddenly punches***HOLMES***on the shoulder.***HOLMES***lets out a yelp of pain)*

Uhhuh. . . I told you about messin' with me.

JOHNNY BOY HOLMES

(holding his shoulder)

Shit. Why didn't you hit Big Shot, you bastard? He brought the shit up.

ORA

(has the door propped open again)

Shit. That narrow head bastid know better than to fuck with me.

*(He peers out the door and as he does***LOVE***gestures as if to hit him in the back.)*

JOHNNY BOY HOLMES

*(to***LOVE***)*

You scared ass bastard. Why don't you do it?

ORA

(turning around and throwing up his hands to defend himself)

Yeh, I wish you would, you bullet head sonofabitch.

HOLMES*goes and sits on a radiator next to***HINES**.

WILLIE LOVE

Man, nobody's thinking about you, Big Shot.

(He goes to pee.)

ORA

(pulling the door open again)

Here come Perry and them.

JOHNNY BOY HOLMES

(jumping off the radiator still holding his shoulder)

Perry and who else?

ORA

George Davis and Donald Farrell.

HINES

Donald Farrell? What the hell's he doin' down here? Where the hell is Foots?

WILLIE LOVE

Yeh, what the hell is Perry doing bringing Farrell down here with 'em? Shit.

ORA*pulls the door open, and***PERRY, DAVIS***and***FARRELL***come in*.

PERRY

Hey, what's happening?

JOHNNY BOY HOLMES

Shit. I should ask you. Where's Foots?

GEORGE DAVIS

He had to stay upstairs for awhile. Powell wanted to talk to him. . .or something.

ORA

*(to***FARRELL***)*

Man, whatta you want down here? Nobody asked you to come.

GEORGE DAVIS

I told him he could come. Why not?

ORA

Whatta you mean, why not? You know goddamn well, why not. Silly sumbitch!

PERRY

Ah, Big Shot, why don't you be cool for a change, huh?

GEORGE DAVIS

Yeh, man, Big Shot. Donald's not going to hurt anything.

ORA

No?

(Taking out a much-smoked cigarette butt.)

Maybe you don't think so. . .but I do.

GEORGE DAVIS

Oh, man, shit.

DONALD FARRELL

Why don't you want me here, Big Shot?

ORA

*(glaring at***FARRELL***)*

Man, don't be asking me questions.

DONALD FARRELL

Don't ask you questions? Why the hell not?

ORA

*(menacingly at***FARRELL***)*

Cause I said so, that's why You don't like it, muthafucka?

PERRY

(stepping between them)

Goddamn it, Big Shot, why don't you sit your ass down for awhile and shut the hell up?

ORA

*(turning to***PERRY***)*

You gonna make me, muthafucka?

PERRY

*(stepping to face***ORA***)*

I can. And you better believe it, Baby!

ORA

Shit.

*(Disparagingly. Moving away from***FARRELL***and back to the center of the room.)*

Well you damn sure got your chance right now, you black sonofabitch.

GEORGE DAVIS

(moves between PERRY *and* ORA *)*

Oh, goddamnit why don't both you guys sit down. You too, Donald.

FARRELL *moves to sit on a radiator beside* HOLMES *and* HINES.

Ora, you wrong, man, and you know it.

ORA

How come I'm wrong, huh? You know goddamn well that skinny cocksucka over there

(at FARRELL *)*

ain't got no business down here. He ain't gonna do a damn thing but stand around and look.

WILLIE LOVE

(laughing)

That's all I'm gonna do.

HINES

(hunching HOLMES *with his elbow)*

Yeh, but that's okay for you, Willie. You so black, if you stand still nobody'll know you're standing there anyway.

All laugh. ORA *takes the opportunity to go to the door and crack it open.*

PERRY

Where's the rest of those guys?

HINES

I guess they must still be upstairs in that broom closet.

PERRY

Broom closet?

He and DAVIS *lean against one of the walls and begin to smoke.*

HINES

Yeh, Knowles and Skippy got Karolis upstairs in a broom closet waiting till everybody leaves the floor I guess.

DONALD FARRELL

Jimmy Karolis?

JOHNNY BOY HOLMES

Yeah, that's who we're waiting for.

(Giggles.)

DONALD FARRELL

What the hell's gonna happen then?

ORA

(turning from door)

Man, what the hell you care, huh? Pee-the-bed-muthafucka!

HINES

Damn, George!

GEORGE DAVIS

Damn, what?

HINES

Seems to me like Big Shot's right. You bring this cat down here and he doesn't even know what's happening.

ORA

You goddamn real I'm right. Simple ass cats.

DONALD FARRELL

What're you guys gonna gang Jimmy Karolis?

ORA

We gonna break that muthafucka's back.

DONALD FARRELL

For what?

ORA

Look man, why don't you shut up and get the hell out of here, huh?

DONALD FARRELL

You mean all you guys're gonna jump on Karolis?

ORA

(walking over to FARRELL *and grabbing him by the shirt)*

You gonna stick up for him?

FARRELL *tries to push Ora's hands from his shirt, and though he is much taller than* ORA, ORA *pulls him from his seat.*

DONALD FARRELL

Goddamn it, Ora, why don't you cut the shit?

GEORGE DAVIS

Yeh, Ora, cut it out.

PERRY

Goddamn; that cat's always going for bad.

GEORGE *comes over to restrain* ORA, *but* ORA *succeeds in punching* FARRELL *in the stomach.* FARRELL *clutches his stomach and sinks to the floor groaning.*

PERRY

(to ORA *)*

You bastard.

ORA *swings around to confront him.*

ORA

You come on too, if you want to, you black sonofabitch!

GEORGE *pushes them apart again and his push sends* ORA *rattling heavily against the door.*

Goddamnit, George, why don't you stay the fuck out of this?

GEORGE DAVIS

Because there wasn't a goddamn reason in the world for you to hit Donald like that.

(Going to help FARRELL *up.)*

Damn, Ora, you're a wrong sonofabitch, you know that?

DONALD FARRELL

(still doubled up and holding his stomach. He pulls his arm back when GEORGE *tries to help him up)*

No, man! Lemme stay here.

(Still groaning.)

Ora, you dirty cocksucker.

ORA

Boy, you better shut up before I stomp mudholes in your pissy ass.

The door is suddenly pushed open and KNOWLES *and* SKIPPY *come in holding* KAROLIS *by the arms. Karolis' head is hanging, and he is crying softly and blood is on his shirt and face. His hair is mussed and standing all over his head.*

WILLIE LOVE

Ga-uh damn! What'd you cats do?

KNOWLES

(giggling stupidly)

Love, now what the hell does it look like we did? Broke this muthafucka's jaw.

HINES

Damn. I thought we were just bringing the cat down here to fight Foots. I didn't know you guys were gonna break his head first.

SKIPPY

Well, he didn't wanna come. We had to persuade him.

KNOWLES

Shit, Skippy, whatta you mean "we?" I did all the persuading.

ORA

Aw, shit, Knowles. I bloodied the cat's lip. You trying to take all the credit.

SKIPPY

Yeh, Knowles. You didn't hit the cat but once, and that was on the goddamn shoulder.

Letting KNOWLES *drag* KAROLIS *into a corner where he lets him drop.*

You know what this cat was doing all the time we was in that goddamn broom closet? Tellin' jokes.

(Laughs.)

They must not a been funny either. Karolis didn't laugh once.

KNOWLES

What should I do with this guy. I gotta drag him everywhere.

ORA

Drop him in that goddamn corner.

(Walks over to corner and nudges KAROLIS *with his foot.)*

Hey, muthafucka. Hey! Why don't you straighten up?

SKIPPY

(noticing FARRELL, *who is still crumpled in an opposite corner, but stirring)*

Damn! What the hell happened to Donald?

PERRY

That goddamn Big Shot had to show how bad he was.

ORA

(laughing paradoxically)

He called me a nigger.

All laugh.

WILLIE LOVE

Well, what the hell are you? Wha's the matter, you shamed of your people?

ORA

Fuck you!

(He still stands over KAROLIS, *nudging him with his foot.)*

Hey, man, get up!

(Laughs.)

HINES

Damn, Ora. Why don't you leave the cat alone?

ORA

(bending over as if to talk in KAROLIS' *ear)*

Hey, baby, why don't you get up? I gotta nice fat sausage here for you.

GEORGE DAVIS

Goddamn, Big Shot. . .You really a wrong sonofabitch!

ORA

Look man.

(Now kneeling over the slumped figure.)

If you want to get in on this you line up behind me. I don't give a shit what you got to say.

WILLIE LOVE

Man, George, leave the cat alone. You know that's his stick. That's what he does

(laughing)

for his kicks. . .rub up against half-dead white boys.

All laugh.

ORA

(looking over his shoulder. . .grudgingly having to smile too)

I'd rub up against your momma too.

(Leaning back to KAROLIS. *)*

Come on, baby. . .I got this fat ass sa-zeech for you!

WILLIE LOVE

Ora, you mad cause you don't have a momma of your own to rub up against.

All laugh.

ORA

(turns again, this time less amused)

Fuck you, you bony head sonofabitch. As long as I can rub against your momma . . .or your fatha'

(laughs at his invention)

I'm doin' alright.

Door is pushed open suddenly and FOOTS *comes in. He is nervous but keeps it hidden by a natural glibness and a sharp sense of what each boy in the room expects, singularly, from him. He is the weakest physically and smallest of the bunch, but he is undoubtedly their leader. When* FOOTS *comes in* KAROLIS *looks up quickly, then slumps again.*

HINES

Man, where the hell you been?

FOOTS

That goddamn Van Ness had me in his office. He said I'm a credit to my race.

(Laughs and all follow.)

He said I'm smart-as-a-whip

(imitating Van Ness)

and should help him to keep all you unsavory

(again imitating)

elements in line.

All laugh again.

WILLIE LOVE

Yeh? What's he talking about?

FOOTS

Well, he seems to think that you guys. . .particularly that goddamn Big Shot and Knowles, are not good influences in this joint.

PERRY

Boy, you can say that again. Nutty muthafuckas!

ORA

(to PERRY *)*

Fuck you, tar baby!

FOOTS

Well, I'm supposed to make sure that you guys don't do anything bad to anybody. Especially to James Karolis.

(Laughing.)

GEORGE DAVIS

Oh yeh? He know about that?

FOOTS

Yeh, somebody told him Knowles said he was gonna kick Karolis' ass.

(Seeing KAROLIS *in the corner for the first time. His first reaction is horror and disgust. . .but he keeps it controlled as is his style, and merely half-whistles.)*

Goddamn! What the fuck happened to him?

(He goes over to KAROLIS *and kneels near him, threatening to stay too long. He controls the impulse and gets up and walks back to where he was. He is talking throughout his action.)*

Damn! What'd you guys do, kill the cat?

PERRY

Heavy handed Big Shot again.

FOOTS

(looks at ORA *quickly with disgust but softens it immediately to comic disdain)*

What the hell you hit him with, Ora, a goddamn train?

ORA

(happy at the notice of his destruction)

No, man, I just bopped him in the mouth with the back of my hand.

FOOTS

Ga-uhd damn! You a rough ass cat, Shot. He sure don't look like he's in any way to fight anybody.

ORA

(laughing)

No, but he might be able to suck you off. Hee, hee.

WILLIE LOVE

Shit. You the one that look like you want that, Big Shot.

FOOTS

Oh, shit. There wasn't any need of bringing the cat down here if you guys were gonna fuck him up before I got here. He was supposed to fight me.

(Almost angry.)

HINES

Yeh, that's what I thought. You shouldn't of sent Ora and Knowles up after him then.

FOOTS

The only person I asked to go up was Skippy.

SKIPPY

Well, the sonofabitch wouldn't come. . .so, I got Superduck over there to help me. I didn't ask Ora to come. Knowles did.

KNOWLES

Oh, man, the cat's here. Get him up on his feet

(laughs)

then knock him down. That's all. That don't seem like no big problem to me.

(Through most of the action KNOWLES *is drumming on the walls or the window or the door or the floor, in a kind of drum and bugle corps beat. . .also supplying the bugle parts vocally.)*

WILLIE LOVE

Man, Knowles, why don't you stop being a goddamn Elk all the time. Damn. That cat's always drumming on something. Why don't you get a goddamn drum?

KNOWLES

I'm going to drum on your bony head in a little while if you don't shut up.

FOOTS

Well, I don't see any reason to keep all this shit up. Just pour water on the cat and let's get outta here.

ORA

What? You mean you made us go through all this bullshit for nothing?

FOOTS

Well, what the hell am I gonna do, beat on the guy while he's sprawled on the floor. Damn, Ora, you're a pretty lousy sonofabitch.

HINES

Man, Big Shot'd stomp anybody in any damn condition. He likes it when they're knocked out first, especially.

FOOTS

I'm pushed! There's no reason to stay here. I can't fight the guy like he is.

DONALD FARRELL

(*who has pushed himself up and is leaning against the wall*)

I sure am glad somebody's got some sense here.

FOOTS

(*seeing* FARRELL *for the first time*)

What the hell you doing here? Who asked you to come here, huh?

(*Embarrassed and angry.*)

ORA

That stupid ass Perry brought him.

PERRY

That's right. I just thought there was gonna be a fight. I didn't know you guys were gonna lynch anybody.

FOOTS

Lynch, your ass. Look, Donald, why don't you leave, huh? Nobody needs you here.

DONALD FARRELL

(*slowly*)

Yeh, okay, Ray. But I just want to know why you're gonna beat up on Jimmy like this. What the hell did he do to you?

FOOTS

(*almost indignantly*)

None of your goddamn business, Farrell. Just leave!

ORA

Yeh, man. I should've thrown your ass out when you first come in here. Pee-the-bed sonofabitch.

DONALD FARRELL

O˙K˙

(*Stands up, still lightly holding his stomach.*)

O˙K˙ But I want to take Jimmy out of here with me. He can't fight anybody.

ORA

Man, you better shut your goddamn mouth and get outta here!

FOOTS

Look, Donald, just leave, that's all. You hear?

(*Turns his back on* FARRELL *and walks toward* KAROLIS, *then thinking better of it turns toward* FARRELL *again.*)

DONALD FARRELL

Ray! You're not gonna beat the guy up when he's like that are you?

FOOTS

I don't need you to tell me what to do.

(*He goes over and pulls the door open slightly.*)

Just get out of here. . .now!

DONALD FARRELL

(*takes a step then looks toward* KAROLIS)

But look at him, he can't do anything.

(*To* FOOTS.)

Why do you want to do this?

FOOTS

Goddamn it, get out!

DONALD FARRELL

That's no answer.

FOOTS

Man, I'll punch you in the belly myself.

DONALD FARRELL

Shit.

(*Disparagingly. . .which makes* FOOTS *madder.*)

FOOTS

(*in low horrible voice*)

Goddamnit. You better get the fuck outta here, right now!

DONALD FARRELL

Nobody's gonna tell me why?

(*He starts to move for the door.*)

PERRY

Look, Donald, you better cool it, Buddy. You heard about that letter didn't you?

DONALD FARRELL

Letter? What letter?

FOOTS

Man, I told you to leave. I'm not gonna tell you again.

PERRY

(*laughing*)

The letter Karolis sent Foots telling him he thought he was "beautiful". . .and that he wanted to blow him.

All giggle.

DONALD FARRELL

(*turning sharply toward* FOOTS)

A letter?

ORA

(*rushing at* FARRELL *from the side and punching him*)

Goddamn it! Didn't you hear somebody say leave, pee ass?

FOOTS

(*pushing between* FARRELL *and* ORA)

Cut it out, Ora!

DONALD FARRELL

(*hurt again and slumping.* ORA *tries to hit him again and the punch is blocked by* FOOTS *who glares savagely at* ORA)

A letter?

(*Groaning.*)

Oh, Ray, come on. Why don't you come off it?

(*He is looking up at* FOOTS.)

ORA

(*leaps around* FOOTS *and pushes* FARRELL *into the door*)

Get out of here you dumb bastid!

KNOWLES *pulls the door open and shoves* FARRELL *through it.*

Goddamn, what a stupid punk.

(*He laughs, as do some of the others.*)

FOOTS

(*stares at the closed door for a second, then he turns slowly to the others*)

Look, let's get out of here. This stuff is finished.

JAMES KAROLIS

(*has brought his head up during the preceding scuffle, and has been staring at* FOOTS. *As* FOOTS *and the others look over toward him, he speaks very softly, but firmly*)

No. Nobody has to leave. I'll fight you, Ray.

(*He begins to pull himself up. He is unsteady on his feet, but determined to get up. . .and to fight.*)

I *want* to fight you.

FOOTS *is startled and his eyes widen momentarily, but he suppresses it.*

HINES

Damn. Some guys don't know when they're well off.

ORA

Yeh. You little skinny muthafucka. You should've kept your mouth shut, and played dead.

KNOWLES

Goddamn. You mean that sonofabitch wasn' dead? Shit, Big Shot, you must hit like a girl.

ORA

(*to* KNOWLES)

Yeh? Well, let me hit you, you bastid.

KNOWLES

(*disparagingly*)

Shit.

JAMES KAROLIS

(*pushing himself off the wall slightly and wiping his face with his sleeve*)

No, Ray. Don't have them leave. I want to fight you.

FOOTS

(*very silent and stiff, not wanting to be pushed*)

Oh?

(*Slowly.*)

Well, that's damn fine with me.

ORA

(*going behind* KAROLIS *and pushing him toward* FOOTS)

You wanna fight? Well, go ahead, dick licker.

(*Howls.*)

HINES

Yeh, get it on, fellas.

JOHNNY BOY HOLMES

Karolis must be bad.

(*Laughs.*)

GEORGE DAVIS

Man

(*to* KAROLIS)

you sure you want to get in this? You look kinda shaky to me.

SKIPPY

Man, just sit down and watch. This might be good.

JAMES KAROLIS

Yes, Ray, I want to fight you, now. I want to kill you.

(His voice is still soft and terrible. The word "kill" is almost spit out. FOOTS *does not move. He turns his head slightly to look* KAROLIS *in the eye, but he is motionless otherwise.)*

ORA

Goddamn it, fight!

He pushes KAROLIS *again. This time* KAROLIS *almost bumps* FOOTS *and* FOOTS *throws up his hands and pushes him away.*

FOOTS

Goddamn you! Goddamn you!

(His body moves from being completely immobile to an angry snarling figure.)

You bastard!

(The others become animated, clapping their hands, shouting, whistling, and moving around as if they were also fighting.)

JAMES KAROLIS

No, Ray. I want to fight you.

(He is moving around now, but his hands are still held tightly and awkwardly at his sides.)

I want to fight you.

FOOTS

(moving around with his hands up to fight. They both move around each other and FOOTS *seems to get momentarily, a change of heart)*

Look now, Karolis. . .you're just gonna get your head blocked.

JAMES KAROLIS

(as if he didn't hear)

No. You have to fight me. I sent you a note, remember. That note saying I loved you.

(The others howl at this.)

The note saying you were beautiful.

(Tries to smile.)

You remember that note, Ray?

FOOTS

Goddamn it, if you're going to fight, fight you cock-sucker!

JAMES KAROLIS

Yeh. That's what I'm going to do Ray. I'm going to fight you. We're here to fight. About that note, right? The one that said I wanted to take you into my mouth.

FOOTS *lunges at* KAROLIS *and misses*.

Did I call you Ray in that letter. . .or Foots?

(Trying to laugh.)

Foots!

(Shouts.)

I'm going to break your fucking neck. That's right. That's who I want to kill. Foots!

ORA

(*pushing* KAROLIS *into* FOOTS)

Fight, you goddamn sissy-punk bastid!

FOOTS

(slaps KAROLIS *with his open hand)*

You crazy bastard!

JAMES KAROLIS

(backing up. . .wanting to talk but still moving as if to fight)

Are you Ray or Foots, huh?

The crowd begins to move forward to cut down the area of the match so that the two fighters will have to make contact.

HINES

Hit the sonofabitch, Foots!

FOOTS

Fight, you bastard!

JAMES KAROLIS

Yeh! That's why we're here, huh? I'll fight you, Foots!

(Spits the name.)

I'll fight you. Right here in this same place where you said your name was Ray.

(Screaming. He lunges at FOOTS *and manages to grab him in a choke hold.)*

Ray, you said your name was. You said Ray. Right here in this filthy toilet. You said Ray.

(He is choking FOOTS *and screaming*. FOOTS *struggles and is punching* KAROLIS *in the back and stomach, but he cannot get out of the hold.)*

You put your hand on me and said Ray!

SKIPPY

Goddamn, that bastid is choking the shit out of Foots.

The two still struggle, with KAROLIS *continuing to have the advantage.*

HINES

That fuck is trying to kill Foots!

JOHNNY BOY HOLMES

Goddamn it!

ORA

(suddenly leaping on Karolis' back, puts the same choke hold on him)

You cocksucka. . .how's that feel, huh?

(He pulls KAROLIS *off of* FOOTS *who falls to his knees.)*

Huh?

KNOWLES

Let's kick this cocksucka's ass real good.

He rushes up to help ORA, *and the whole of the crowd surges into the center punching the fallen* KAROLIS *in the face.* KNOWLES *is screaming with laughter.*

JAMES KAROLIS

No, no, his name is Ray, not Foots. You stupid bastards. I love somebody you don't even know.

He is dragged to the floor. The crowd is kicking and cursing him. ORA *in the center punching the fallen* KAROLIS *in the face.* KNOWLES *is screaming with laughter.*

FOOTS *is now on his hands and knees but his head hangs limply and he is unaware of what is happening. He slumps again.*

They have beaten KAROLIS *enough*. KAROLIS *is spread in the center of the floor and is unmoving.* ORA *drapes some of the wet toilet paper across his body and face.*

ORA

Let's stick the sonofabitch's head in the damn toilet.

PERRY

Oh, man, fuck you. The cat's completely out. What more can you do to him?

GEORGE DAVIS

Yeh, let's get Foots, and get outta here before somebody comes in.

ORA

Yeh. Hee, hee. Look at ol' Foots. That fuckin' paddy boy almost kilt him.

WILLIE LOVE

Yeh.

(Laughing.)

I told you Karolis was probably bad!

All laugh.

KNOWLES

Nutty sonofabitch.

WILLIE LOVE

(picking up FOOTS, *helped by* HINES *and* HOLMES)

Hey, big eye! Get the hell up.

ORA

(takes a paper cup and dips it in the commode and throws it in Foots' face)

Yeh, get up, bad ass.

(Laughs.)

They all leave, as FOOTS *begins to come to. All making noise, laughing, cursing.* KAROLIS *lies as before in the center of the room, motionless.*

After a minute or so KAROLIS *moves his hand. Then his head moves and he tries to look up. He draws his legs up under him and pushes his head off the floor. Finally he manages to get to his hands and knees. He crawls over to one of the commodes, pulls himself up, then falls backward awkwardly and heavily. At this point, the door is pushed open slightly, then it opens completely and* FOOTS *comes in. He stares at Karolis' body for a second, looks quickly over his shoulder, then runs and kneels before the body, weeping and cradling the head in his arms.*

BLACK